



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS BIENNIAL RESEARCH COMPETITION

Funding Period: February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2026

AWARD INFORMATION FOR 2024-2026 FUNDING CYCLE:

For this solicitation, NJS GC anticipates funding:

- Up to eight (8) proposals with a maximum budget of \$70,000 per year for two (2) years.
- Up to seven (7) proposals with a maximum budget of \$20,000 per year for two (2) years.
- Total funding available combined is up to \$560,000 per year for two (2) years.
- Proposals will be reviewed as two separate groups according to funding requested.

DEADLINES FOR APPLICATIONS:

- Letters of Intent: May 2, 2023, by 11:59 pm ET
- Full Proposals: June 20, 2023, by 11:59 pm ET

PLEASE NOTE: The opportunity to submit a full proposal is contingent on the timely receipt of a Letter of Intent.

ABOUT NEW JERSEY SEA GRANT CONSORTIUM

New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium (NJS GC) brings together the region's colleges, universities, and other entities with expertise in marine, coastal, and estuarine science and an interest in the policies that govern New Jersey's coastal environments and assets. Collectively the organization works to advance knowledge and wise utilization of New Jersey's marine, coastal and estuarine resources and make a positive impact on marine and coastal policy for the region. For more information about NJS GC, its programs, and its upcoming 2024-2027 [Strategic Plan](#) please visit <http://njseagrant.org/>.

NJS GC is also the host institution for the National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP) in New Jersey and is part of a network of 34 programs administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) dedicated to wise utilization and well-informed management of the Nation's coastal and Great Lakes resources. NJS GC is funded by NOAA and the NSGCP through a four-year grant (2024-2027) to provide research, education, and outreach programs informed by sound science that promote sustainable use of New Jersey's coastal and marine resources. Funding for this grant will be allocated in the Federal Omnibus Budget and must be approved by Congress annually. This solicitation is directed towards the research program that will be part of NJS GC's omnibus cycle that begins on February 1, 2024, and ends on January 31, 2026. Descriptions of recent omnibus research projects can be found on NJS GC's [website](#).

I. GENERAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

The purpose of this solicitation is to invite research proposals for the upcoming NJSGC's omnibus grant period (February 1, 2024 -January 31, 2026). The application process has two steps. First, to submit a full proposal, prospective investigators must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) that adheres to the guidance herein. Letters of Intent will undergo an administrative review, after which those meeting the review requirements will be encouraged for submission as full proposals. The opportunity to submit a full proposal is contingent on the timely receipt of a Letter of Intent. Second, prospective investigators must submit a full proposal that adheres to the guidance herein. Full proposals will be evaluated by external peer reviewers and reviewed by a diverse Technical Review Panel.

Original, innovative proposals that target the research priorities and principles described here are welcomed. NJSGC is interested in funding proposals from all qualified investigators, particularly those from institutions with a history of under-funding from Sea Grant and/or from under-represented populations that:

- Engage and support students and promote workforce development.
- Demonstrate an integrated approach to research, outreach, and engagement.
- Engage NJSGC's extension, communications, and/or education professionals to support the transition of applied research into useful applications that address the needs of New Jersey's coastal residents and stakeholders.
- Involve stakeholders and end-users throughout all phases of the project, including identifying need and the statement of the problem at the pre-proposal stage.
- Strive to contribute to increased STEM literacy, greater stewardship, and the ideals of diversity and inclusion.

In addition, in the interest of a balanced research portfolio that engages the broadest possible range of eligible applicants, this RFP incorporates input from many of NJSGC's academic partners who have emphasized the hurdles faced in competing for research dollars. As a result of these discussions, proposals are being solicited at two funding levels, and greater emphasis has been placed on stakeholder and student involvement as well as engagement of diverse audiences.

A. INVESTIGATOR ELIGIBILITY

NSGCP and NJSGC are committed to building an inclusive program that serves all people including those with unique needs, circumstances, perspectives, and ways of thinking. Eligible applicants of all ages, races, ethnicities, national origins, sex, sexual orientations, gender identities, abilities, cultures, religions, citizenship status, marital status, job classifications, veteran status, and socioeconomic status are encouraged to apply.

To be eligible, project principal investigators (PIs) must be affiliated with a New Jersey university, two or four-year college, research laboratory, museum, or other non-profit or tribal institution with a research or science-based mission. Project co-principal investigators (Co-PIs) must be affiliated with the aforementioned types of institutions, even if located out of state. Investigators may submit multiple applications in both funding categories as the PI or Co-PI; however, each application must describe a clearly distinct project and be prepared and submitted separately.

NJSGC encourages multi-institution, multi-disciplinary, and multi-investigator applications but individuals from state and federal agencies and for-profit and foreign organizations cannot apply for direct support. However, their contribution may qualify as matching funds (see [Section B](#)) for the project. NJSGC also welcomes proposals for cooperative projects that engage eligible research institutions with the private sector.

B. BUDGET and REQUIRED COST SHARE (MATCH)

The duration of the funding period for projects is February 1, 2024 - January 31, 2026. Please note budgets at either funding level may include indirect costs and must include the required 2-to-1 match (for every \$2 requested of federal Sea Grant funds, \$1 in non-federal matching funds must be provided by the proposer). All awards are contingent on the availability of federal funds to NJSGC through NOAA/NSGCP from the FY 2024 and FY 2025 federal budgets.

Federal law requires that NJSGC provide a **non-federal cost share** (match) of at least 50% or \$1 for every \$2 of federal funds it receives. For all awards made through this solicitation, cost share is the applicant's responsibility. Cost share sources must be clearly identified and projects selected for funding will be required to provide documentation supporting the funds claimed on each invoice submitted. Cost share must be expended during the same time period as the project and may be provided as cash or from acceptable in-kind resources. Examples of cost share or matching sources include: non-federally supported salaries wages and benefits of those working on the project; expendable supplies and equipment; ship time; donated volunteer time, calculated at a reasonable hourly rate; supplies; space or equipment; tuition waivers for students involved in the project; and unrecovered indirect costs. Matching funds do not necessarily have to come from the PIs' home institution. Foundation, state or local grants, and other non-federal funds, including funds from private and/or industry sources, are eligible sources of matching funds if documented approval is provided at the time of application from those sources.

C. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Workforce development through the inclusion of pre-college, undergraduate, graduate students or post-doctoral researchers is a required component for funding. Only in exceptional cases will research projects be funded that lack the significant involvement of undergraduate or graduate students or post-doctoral researchers. NJSGC encourages projects that include direct student support in proposed budgets as well. Furthermore, NJSGC and NSGCP encourages applicants to recruit and engage students and fellows from under-represented groups, individuals with disabilities, and individuals from economically or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds that may have limited ability to increase their STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) literacy and/or to pursue careers in STEM- related fields.

D. OUTREACH PLAN

Community engagement and societal relevance are critical to all Sea Grant efforts. Each proposal submitted to NJSGC must include a detailed outreach plan that describes how broader audiences can use and benefit from anticipated results. Research projects that offer benefits and societal impacts to coastal communities, including those with stakeholders from under-represented or under-served groups, are strongly encouraged. A robust outreach plan should define the target audience(s), the rationale for choosing the target audience(s), planned activities with the target audience(s), and how the effectiveness of the outreach plan will be evaluated.

Because NJSGC supports scientific excellence that addresses relevant coastal issues and achieves broader impacts including, but not limited to policy, management, education (formal and/or informal), and socio-economic impacts, the application of research results through NJSGC's extension, communications, and education programs or by other means is a key consideration in selection for funding. PIs are strongly encouraged to contact NJSGC [extension](#), [communications](#), and/or [education personnel](#) well in advance of the application deadline to help prepare the outreach section of their proposal. Please note all funded PIs will have an NJSGC liaison assigned to them if they did not identify one in their proposal. The liaison will assist the PI in ensuring the integration of outreach into the research. Collaboration with industry and/or state and regional agencies is also encouraged.

E. DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN

All proposals submitted in response to this RFP must include a data management plan (DMP) that describes how the proposer will meet NOAA's data regulations which require all data and information collected and/or created under all Sea Grant-funded projects be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users free of charge or at minimal cost in a timely manner (typically no later than two years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or by security requirements. The requirement has two basic parts: (1) environmental data generated by a grant project must be made available after a reasonable period of exclusive use, and (2) the grant application must describe the plan to make the data available. PIs are expected to execute these plans. If the proposed project will produce environmental data, it must conform to [NOAA's Data Sharing Directive for Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and Contracts](#). Funds may be budgeted in the project proposal for data management. If the proposed research will not generate environmental data, then a data sharing plan must be included in the proposal that states "This project will not generate any environmental data." For full proposals, the PI may also refer to the [Data Management Plan Form](#) on NJS GC's website. A DMP is not required for the Letter of Intent.

F. POST AWARD REPORTING

Specific reporting is required by the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) for each NJS GC-funded research project. These reports collect information about project participants, students supported, research activities and outcomes, publications, tools and technologies developed and used, management and decision-making processes influenced, educational products and programs produced, and other metrics critical to NJS GC's own annual performance evaluation. Although not all projects are expected to have information to report in all categories, each funded project is expected to contribute significantly to NJS GC's impacts in New Jersey. It is the responsibility of funded Principal Investigators to provide all reports to NJS GC on a timely basis. In turn, NJS GC is obligated to file these reports with NSGO. These reports include a progress report, a final report, and an annual report, also referred to as the PIER (Performance, Implementation, Evaluation and Resources) report. If for any reason the project is terminated before the stated contract date, a final report and an annual PIER report is still required. In addition, and in conjunction with the PI's business office, required fiscal reports must be filed with NJS GC's Grants and Contracts Manager on a timely basis.

G. IMPORTANT NOTES

- Investigators are encouraged to contact NJS GC's [Director of Research and Extension](#) to discuss ideas and ask pertinent questions including inquiries about the application and review process.
- Deadlines are firm. Late Letters of Intent or late full proposals will not be accepted.
- This solicitation contains specific formatting, content, and submission instructions that must be adhered to for each LOI, and full proposal submitted. Failure to meet these requirements is grounds for rejection of an application without review.
- Funding of projects is contingent upon federal allocations to NJS GC and NSGCP. Federal allocations are subject to annual approval by the United States Congress.
- A proposal may be removed from further consideration at any point in the process if an investigator has overdue obligations to NJS GC from a previous research contract.

II. RESEARCH PRIORITIES

For this cycle, NJSGC is seeking proposals that correspond to its 2024-2027 [Strategic Plan](#). To support the implementation of this plan while best reflecting the current science and policy needs of New Jersey's coast, estuaries, and watersheds, the following research priorities were determined by a diverse group of stakeholders including NJSGC's Stakeholder Advisory Board, the Board of Trustees, Member Institution Representatives, and other interested partners and stakeholders. These priorities, divided by the strategic focus area they correspond to, are listed below. For detailed information on each of these strategic focus areas please refer to NJSGC's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan.

In the interest of a balanced research portfolio and a research program that best supports NJSGC's Strategic Plan, please note that, in consultation with NJSGC's Director of Research and Extension and the members of a technical review panel, NJSGC's Executive Director reserves the right to distribute fundable projects across the four focus areas.

Proposals must address, but are not limited to, one or more of these strategic focus area priorities. Proposals shall build upon and extend existing knowledge and efforts related to New Jersey' marine and coastal research priorities; make that information available to communities and stakeholders; include Sea Grant education and extension professionals, community representatives, government, academic, nongovernmental, and industry partners, as appropriate; and proactively incorporate principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accessibility at every level of the work. The participation and involvement of community, government, academic, non-government, and industry stakeholders in the projects are strongly encouraged.

HEALTHY COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS (HCE)

In general, NJSGC seeks proposals in HCE that address development in coastal ecosystems, non-point source pollution (eutrophication), habitat loss, marine debris (including microplastics), groundwater salinization, ecosystem-based approaches to management of land, water and living resources, ecosystem restoration (function and productivity), and harmful algal blooms. More specifically research proposals should address these priorities:

Develop and evaluate tools and techniques for adaptation to climate change or sea level rise (including retreat or adaptation) of environmental infrastructure (human built and natural) that address mitigation, restoration, and response planning for natural systems.

Investigate and evaluate the current and future effects of climate change (e.g., temperature, ocean acidification, sea level rise, hypoxia, or their interactions) on coastal, estuarine, and marine organisms (including life history and morphological or physiological responses), their ecology, or their ecosystem, particularly on critical habitats for fisheries.

Evaluate impacts of offshore wind farming on local oceanography (e.g., physical, geological, chemical, and biological), especially in association with habitat use or abundance changes in nektonic, sestonic, or benthic organisms.

Investigate or model the impacts of climate change, sea level rise, or saltwater inundation on New Jersey coastal habitats (e.g., tidal freshwater wetlands, salt marshes, high marsh, dunes, or maritime forests) in regard to their plant communities in response to methane emissions, marsh migration, or soil dynamics, etc.

Develop and assess stormwater best management practices, models, or green infrastructure technologies that communities can use to reduce stormwater impacts to coastal water bodies regarding water quality (e.g., eutrophication, acidification, or chemical contaminants).

SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE (SFA)

In general, NJSGC seeks proposals in SFA that address fisheries management, sustainable harvesting practices, consumer education and awareness, climate impacts, resource restoration and enhancement, new aquaculture technologies, diversification of aquaculture crops, workforce development and training, wildlife interactions with fisheries and aquaculture, and biofouling control for shellfish aquaculture. More specifically research proposals should address these priorities:

Develop and evaluate innovative technologies for sustainable aquaculture through genetically improved stocks, alternative species, or new farming/hatchery production technologies that would contribute to the sustainable development of aquaculture in New Jersey including technologies that enhance the resilience of the aquaculture industry, especially in response to disease and climate change.

Evaluate the current and future impacts of climate change (e.g., temperature increase, sea level rise), ocean acidification (including estuarine and coastal acidification), habitat loss, pollution, hypoxia, invasive species, or their interactions on wild and/or aquacultured finfish/shellfish or on the commercial/recreational fishing and marine aquaculture industries in New Jersey.

Assess impacts of increased offshore wind development (including inshore infrastructure such as cable landings), on recreationally and commercially important, marine and coastal finfish or shellfish, or species of concern (e.g., sharks, highly migratory species, or threatened / endangered species such as whales and sea turtles).

Identify and evaluate biological, ecological, management, or conservation impacts on recreational, commercial, and other species of interest (e.g., prohibited/endangered/etc.) from threats such as warming waters, reduced nursery grounds, HABS, sand mining, energy development, or negative fishing practices, etc.

Evaluate the impacts of different types of aquaculture equipment and operations on wild species (including threatened and endangered species), and provide recommendations for specific Best Management Practices to reduce these impacts (e.g., floating vs. bottom cages, microbial contamination, risk of entanglement, etc.).

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIES (RCE)

In general, NJSGC seeks proposals in RCE that address risk awareness, hazard vulnerability, coastal erosion, beach and dune engineering, storm preparedness, sea level rise and flooding, natural resource restoration (e.g., living shorelines), community resilience planning, offshore wind impacts on coastal communities, and climate migration. More specifically research proposals should address these priorities:

Assess the social, economic, and cultural impacts of continued growth of coastal communities on traditional coastal industries such as fishing and tourism, and the people they support, including impacts on their way of life (e.g., closure of fishing beds, access to beaches and waters, or access of charter fishing industry).

Develop and evaluate coastal resilience and community planning models that incorporate social vulnerability of communities in order for coastal communities to make better informed decisions.

Determine, assess, evaluate, or model the value of ecological restoration and adaptation to reduce community vulnerability to sea level rise, maintain healthy coastal ecosystems, reduce costs of natural or

human-caused disasters, protect critical infrastructure, minimize economic impacts of climate change, reduce the impact of climate stressors on natural systems, or preserve habitat and migration corridors.

Identify and assess the barriers or tipping points (social, cultural, or economic) for individuals or communities (including receiving communities) to undergo climate change migration.

Conduct environmental and socioeconomic analysis to identify the costs and benefits of targeting different areas on the New Jersey coastline to explore scenarios, strategies, and rationale for implementing managed retreat as a part of storm recovery and coastal planning.

ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (ELWD)

In general, NJSGC seeks proposals in ELWD that address climate change, marine debris and microplastics, community resilience, habitat diversity, human interactions and uses, stormwater management, watershed awareness, fishery and aquaculture workforce training, sustainable practices, and diversity in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields. Directed audiences include K-12 schoolchildren, college students, for formal educators (professional development), informal groups (e.g., families, scouts), and adult learners. Delivery methods could include teacher training, in-school programs, field trips, and public outreach events (e.g., Ocean Fun Days). More specifically research proposals should address these priorities:

Develop and assess appropriate informational, educational, or communication tools for a variety of stakeholders that have the potential to improve understanding of climate change (including ocean acidification), sustainable marine-based energy development (e.g., offshore wind, tidal, and wave), or their interrelationships.

Investigate, strengthen, and evaluate mechanisms, strategies, networks, or tools for citizens or communities to be involved in monitoring, incident reporting of coastal issues/problems, or implementation of coastal adaptation that is facilitated by two-way communication between them and policymakers.

Identify the existing knowledge systems in under-resourced and under-represented communities for accessing information about the ocean and coastal environment; determine the measures required to ensure appropriate and effective participation of diverse populations in ocean and coastal education and research; and develop methods so that these populations and their knowledge systems will be more empowered and engaged in ocean research, monitoring, and management in order to build capacity that is more reflective of New Jersey's under-served and under-represented populations.

Assess impacts and effectiveness of the new climate change science standards recently adopted in New Jersey on PreK-12 student learning, on curricular development and dissemination methods, or on new methods for professional development opportunities for educators.

Develop and evaluate new marine and coastal science curricula using the updated New Jersey Student Learning Standards that can effectively incorporate local impacts or case studies to boost the connectivity of climate science to students and their home communities.

III. PROPOSAL PREPARATION INFORMATION

Each application (Letter of Intent or Full Proposal) must be prepared using the following formatting: Single-spaced, 8.5 x 11-inch page size, 1” margins, 12-point type, Times New Roman preferred.

A. LETTER OF INTENT GUIDANCE

- **Letters of Intent due May 2, 2023, by 11:59 pm ET**
- **PIs notified of status: by May 5, 2023**

Each PI must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) in order to submit a full proposal. Full proposals should not deviate greatly from the LOI. However, LOIs are not wholly binding, and the applicant may adjust details of their project before submitting the full proposal as their proposal evolves. LOIs are meant to provide NJS GC with metrics on the scope and size of the application pool to assist with reviewer recruitment and review planning. LOI should present a succinct but sufficiently detailed synopsis of the project that will enable reviewers to evaluate the relevance of the project to NJS GC’s research priorities and Strategic Plan, its technical feasibility, and the PI’s qualifications. LOI undergo an administrative review for completeness.

WHAT TO INCLUDE:

The LOI should be no longer than 2 pages and shall include in the order listed:

- Working project title
- PI and co-PI Name(s)
- PI and co-PI Position(s) and Affiliation
- Partnering Sea Grant Programs or other Federal Partners
- PI Contact Information
- Brief discussion of the focal topic and approach and how it will meet the RFP goals / priorities.
- The approximate funding to be requested with brief budget justification.

PLEASE NOTE: No ancillary materials are permitted at the Letter of Intent stage.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR LETTER OF INTENT AND NOTIFICATION

You must submit your completed Letter of Intent package electronically as one (1) electronic file (single, PDF format only) to NJS GC’s Program Associate [Ms. Lisa Aromando](#) by May 2, 2023, by 11:59 pm ET. Following your submission and administrative review, you will receive an email confirmation from Ms. Aromando by May 5, 2023, for your records.

LETTER OF INTENT EVALUATION

Letters of Intent will be reviewed by NJS GC’s grant team to assure timely submission, to ensure completeness and compliance with proposal formatting and other preparation and submittal instructions. If a LOI does not adhere to these instructions, the PI may not be encouraged to submit a full proposal.

B. FULL PROPOSAL GUIDANCE

- **Notification of status of Letter of Intent: May 5, 2023**
- **Full proposals due: June 20, 2023, by 11:59 pm ET**
- **Final selection, all PIs notified: On or before September 20, 2023**
- **Funded projects begin: February 1, 2024 (contingent on receipt of federal funding)**

PLEASE NOTE: All prospective applicants must have submitted a LOI to submit a full proposal. LOI will undergo an administrative review, after which those meeting the review requirements will be encouraged for submission as full proposals.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

Include each of the following elements in the order listed below:

1. Full Proposal Cover Page: Complete and include NJSGC's [Full Proposal Cover Page](#). Please note this form must be signed by the Principal Investigator (PI) and an Authorized Institutional Representative.

2. Abstract Page: On a separate page, include a title (16 words or less), the name, position, and affiliation of the PI and each Co-PI involved in the project, and an abstract that clearly and concisely describes your project in terms that would be understandable by individuals who are not expert in your field. State the short- and long-term project objectives, methodologies, and rationale of the proposed project. Emphasize the importance, relevance, application, and value to Sea Grant constituents (expected benefits). Limit your abstract to 300 words.

3. Project Narrative: The project narrative contains the description and any graphical components of the proposal. Your proposal should follow and fulfill the following headings in the order listed. These headings reflect NJSGC and NSGCP/NOAA requirements. **A 12-page limit** applies to the narrative which includes tables and figures. Failure to adhere to these guidelines is grounds for return without review. Project narrative must include:

- ✓ Project title (generally the same as LOI title and 16 words or less), and the name, position, and affiliation of the PI and each Co-PI should be presented at the top of the first page of text.
- ✓ Statement of Problem
- ✓ Project Goals and Objectives
- ✓ Detailed description of the relevance of the project to New Jersey and NJSGC's upcoming 2024-2027 [Strategic Plan](#) and corresponding research priorities. Include a rationale that stresses the importance of the project, who the actual or potential users are, and how they are involved or will benefit (e.g., environmental, social, or economic) from the project.
- ✓ Research Plan
- ✓ List state, federal, or private organizations that will be involved in your project and describe their level of participation including funding to be contributed.
- ✓ Statement of expected outcomes for each year of the project and the potential benefits of the proposed work to the economy, environment, and society.
- ✓ Outreach/Extension Plan
- ✓ Student Involvement Plan and potential to engage diverse/and or under-represented or under-served students.

- ✓ Data Management Plan
 - All applications must include a Data Management Plan that is compliant with NOAA’s Public Access to Research Results Plan. The Data Management Plan should not exceed 2 pages. The Data Management Plan should include descriptions of the types of metadata and data expected to be created during the course of the project, plans for disseminating the metadata and data to the broader community, and plans for long-term archiving of the metadata and data. The Data Management Plan is not included in the Project Description page limit. Guidance on presenting Data Management Plan can be found in the [Sea Grant Application guide](#). PI may use the following [template](#) (see description in general information).
 - If proposed activities will not generate any environmental data, such as the scoping activities and research competition, please include the following statement at the end of the proposal: “Because this project will not generate environmental data, a Data Management Plan is not required.”

4. Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire

A separate [Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire](#) (AECQ) must be completed for each relevant project in the application, following further details below. The Applicants must ensure that the questionnaire is completed in full and includes detailed information regarding project location, methodology, and permits. Copies of all permits required for project activities should be included with application materials. If a permit is pending or planned, please provide this information.

Guidance on how to complete the Questionnaire and example Questionnaires for different types of projects can be found [here](#).

The AECQ is required for ALL research projects (those whose project ID starts with “R”) even if the project is fully lab-based or relies on social science. The AECQ is also required for any project that meets the following criteria:

- Environmental permits, authorizations, or waivers
- Biological take and/or release
- Environmental sampling
- Hazardous or toxic substances and waste
- Permanent or temporary environmental effects
- Endangered or threatened species and/or protected areas
- Known or unknown risks to human health or the environment
- Controversial environmental subject matter

A NEPA Statement can be used instead of the AECQ for certain low- impact projects. If none of the project’s activities will take place in the environment and the project is not research, you may include a NEPA Statement in place of the AECQ. However, NOAA has final responsibility to determine whether a project or action requires environmental compliance review. If NOAA determines that a NEPA Statement is not sufficient, staff may request that an AECQ be provided instead. Please use the following format for a NEPA Statement:

“This project’s activities include [list the activities]. Because no part of this project will take place in the environment or involve the collection of environmental data, the NOAA environmental compliance questionnaire is not needed.”

5. Additional Required Materials (not part of the 12-page Project Narrative limit)

- ✓ Project Milestone Chart
- ✓ Literature Cited
- ✓ Letter(s) of Support: Letter(s) of support should be concise and as applicable, should include:
 - Background information on the letter writer's relationship to the research project and the applicant
 - Potential impact of research findings to the letter writer's institution or community
 - Description of any in-kind involvement and/or monetary support to be provided.
 - Role the letter writer will fulfill in the project.
 - Familiarity with the credentials, work, and goals of the applicant
 - History of prior work or collaborations with applicant and/or the team
 - Status of any ongoing partnerships
- ✓ Letter(s) of Support: Letter(s) of support should be concise and as applicable, should include:
 - Information for each Investigator (lead PI first):
 - Curriculum Vitae – Not to exceed two (2) pages per Investigator.
 - Current and pending federal grant supports from all sources (complete and include NJSGC's [Current and Pending Support Form](#)).
 - A list of all peer-reviewed articles (published and in-press only) with NJSGC publication numbers that have resulted from previous Sea Grant-funded research, if any, in the past five years.
 - Titles of student dissertations and/or theses supported by NJSGC-funded research in the past five years, if any.

6. Budget Pages:

Submitted on separate Sea Grant [Budget Form 90-4](#) the budgets for Year 1, Year 2, and Combined Years. Budgets should be written for 12 months for each year with a start date of February 1, 2024 and end date of January 31, 2026. The budget must include the required 2-to-1 match (for every \$2 requested of federal Sea Grant funds, \$1 in non-federal matching funds must be provided by the proposer). See general information about preparing your budget including acceptable sources of matching funds in [Section I.B.](#)

Please note that the first year could be overmatched and undermatch the second year but not the opposite (must have cumulative 50% throughout).

Subcontractors must provide their own budget pages using the Sea Grant [Budget Form 90-4](#).

The PI must strive to distribute funds equally over each of the two years.

All awards are contingent on the availability of federal funds to NJSGC through NOAA/NSGCP.

7. Budget Justification: On separate pages, for each year, provide a line-by-line explanation of each category of funding requested on your budget page for the proposed project. Include the breakdown of calculations used to arrive at the amount in each line of your budget. Subcontractors must also provide their own budget justifications for each year.

DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF PROPOSAL TEAM

Per US Department of Commerce Requirements Sea Grant is required to ask the below **VOLUNTARY** demographic question. Responses, or non-responses, have no relation to or bearing on the proposal review process or evaluation.

Please provide the following information for all named collaborators on your proposal. (2022, OMB approved for PRA under DOC generic clearance information collections, 0690-0030 and 0690-0035)

If you choose to respond, please use this [optional form](#) for collecting the information and **do not include it as part of your application package.**

Do you or your organization identify with any of the following groups that the federal government, in Executive Order 13985, has identified as underserved? Check all that apply.

- a) Black
- b) Latino
- c) Indigenous and/or Native American
- d) Asian American
- e) Pacific Islander
- f) Other person of color
- g) Members of religious minorities
- h) Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons
- i) Persons with disabilities
- j) Persons who live in rural areas
- k) Persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality
- l) No, I do not identify with any of these groups

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR FULL PROPOSAL

The Principal Investigator must submit all components of the full proposal as one (1) electronic file (single PDF format only) to Sea Grant Research Associate [Ms. Lisa Aromando](#) by **June 20, 2023 at or before 11:59 pm ET**. Following your submission, you will receive an email confirmation regarding the administrative review from Ms. Aromando for your records by June 23, 2023.

FULL PROPOSAL REVIEW AND EVALUATION PROCESS

Administrative Review

NJSGC's administrative staff will also conduct an administrative review of all full proposals to ensure completeness and compliance with proposal preparation and submittal instructions. If a full proposal does not adhere to these instructions, it may not move forward to the technical review.

External Peer Review

Each full proposal will be reviewed for scientific merit by at least three out-of-state scholars or specialists with expertise relevant to the proposed research. Their written reviews will be provided to the Technical Review Panel (TRP). Like the TRP, external peer reviewers must operate within procedures that strictly avoid any conflict of interest.

Technical Review

Full proposals will be reviewed and ranked as two separate groups according to funding requested (\$140K or \$40K) by a TRP that is comprised of subject matter experts from the region. NJSGC's federal program officer will be an ex-officio member of this review panel. The rating criteria for the

TRP will be:

- ✓ Technical and Scientific Merit (40 pts)
- ✓ Responsiveness to NJS GC's Strategic Plan and research priorities and expected benefits (15 pts)
- ✓ Outreach Plan (15 pts)
- ✓ Student involvement and potential to engage diverse/and or under-represented student populations (15 pts)
- ✓ Data management plan (5 pts)
- ✓ Professional qualifications of the investigators (5 pts)
- ✓ Budget (5 pts)

Written and panel reviews will adhere to [NOAA's policy on Conflicts of Interest](#)

Please note, in the interest of a diverse and balanced research portfolio that corresponds to and supports NJS GC's current Strategic Plan, in consultation with NJS GC's Director of Research and Extension and the members of the Technical Review Panel, NJS GC's Executive Director may distribute fundable projects at their discretion. Final selection of proposals is subject to the approval of NJS GC's letter of intent by NJS GC's federal program officer.

NOTES FOR FUNDED PROJECTS

- **Principal Investigators of successful proposals will be required, when relevant, to submit documentation of approval for any Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) compliance.**
- **All proposals recommended for funding will require completion of a [90-2 Project Summary Form](#) prior to submission by NJS GC to the National Sea Grant Office.**
- **All funded projects will be required to include acknowledgment of NJS GC support and resources which contributed to the final project.**

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS AND ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

For general submission questions: Ms. Lisa Aromando, Sea Grant Program Associate, 732-872-1300, ext. 10, laromando@njseagrant.org

For questions on collaborations, priorities, evaluation criteria, data management: Dr. Peter Rowe, Executive Director, Director of Research and Extension, 732-872-1300, x 31, prowe@njseagrant.org

For questions on extension: Mr. Mike Danko, Assistant Director of Extension, 732-872-1300, ext. 29, mdanko@njseagrant.org

For questions on education: Ms. Diana Burich, Director of Education, 732-872-1300, ext. 16, dburich@njseagrant.org

For questions on budget preparation: Ms. Debra Burd, Fiscal Officer, 732-872-1300, ext. 23, dburd@njseagrant.org